

improvements. They all left, however, in the autumn. He, with his family, remained alone in this vast wilderness to spend the winter. It proved to be a severe one. He had raised a scanty supply, which he hoped by proper care would be sufficient. The winter closed in with unusual rigor. His nearest neighbor lived about fourteen miles from him. The depth of the snow cut off all communications. A dense forest surrounded him. No friendly neighbor greeted him or inquired for his welfare. Not the sound of a human voice was heard, except those of his own family. With them he found his companions; with them he shared the wants and trials of the winter; with them the dreary nights and lingering months passed away. The storm rushed around his rude cabin, searching out its crevices, or rearing mimic Alps about his door.

But our solitary pioneer had other and more formidable difficulties to encounter. He was obliged to bring his hay, for two cows and a yoke of oxen, from a beaver meadow—a distance of nearly two miles. His wife in his absence, while attending on the duties of her household, had stepped upon the ice, slipped, and fractured a bone in her ankle. Privations and exposure brought on a severe cold: this was soon accompanied with a high fever. Soon her mind wandered, unconscious of her condition. The storm rushed around the poorly-covered cabin and sifted the snow upon her bed. Her youngest child, an infant of about five months old, also sickened. The father laid it at her side, but, alas! the delirious mother

knew not her child. A raging fever had destroyed its natural aliment. His cows afforded no substitute for it. It rapidly declined under sickness and hunger. His stock of provisions were nearly exhausted. His potatoes had frozen by the unexpected severity of the winter. But even without this loss he would have had a scanty supply. He saw with regret that his provisions were not sufficient to supply even the limited wants of his family. Still, as they disappeared, he lived in hope that deliverance would come from some source; yet no relief came. His wife still declined. That kind voice that had encouraged and cheered him in his toils in the wilderness, now uttered only incoherent sounds. Those active limbs, that had never tired in promoting the comfort of her loved companion and little ones, were now helpless. Those eyes, that had so long beamed with affection, now roamed about this scene of sorrow with a vacant stare. There were no kind neighbors near to call with some cooling draught for her fevered lips, and speak kind words of sympathy. He suffered alone in this vast wilderness. There were none to assist him or relieve him one moment in the care of his children and now more than helpless wife. No kind voice greeted him during these lonely and trying months—no hand brought relief. Obliged by these circumstances to remain at home, he saw hunger, famine, and perhaps death, coming upon himself and family with steady and relentless step. The snow had fallen to a great depth. Every path through these extensive forests was blocked up. Not a soli-